

VZCZCXRO1215
PP RUEHAO
DE RUEHCV #1665/01 1581655
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 071655Z JUN 06
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4931
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 6603
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 5539
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY 0493
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 1276
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY 0182
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ PRIORITY 2080
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 0321
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 1419
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0540
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 3133
RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA PRIORITY 1271
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY 3823
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0458
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 2160
RUEHSN/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY 0909
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 3579
RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO PRIORITY 0237
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 0986
RUEHAO/AMCONSUL CURACAO PRIORITY 0861
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 0502
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0270
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA PRIORITY 0771

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 001665

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

HQSOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
DEPT PASS TO AID/OTI RPORTER
COPENHAGEN FOR DLAWTON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/06/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [VE](#)

SUBJECT: LEADING OPPOSITION CANDIDATES SET DEADLINE FOR
DECIDING CHALLENGER

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT R. DOWNES FOR REASON 1.4 (D)

11. (U) In a joint press conference June 5, leading opposition presidential candidates Julio Borges, Teodoro Petkoff, and Manuel Rosales announced their agreement to choose a single opposition candidate by July 31. They are also creating a commission comprised of a representative from each candidate's campaign and each of three electoral NGOs Sumate, Grupo La Colina and We Want to Choose (Queremos Elegir) that will organize a primary by August 6, if they cannot agree on the single nominee. Representatives that will form this commission met most of June 6 to establish ground rules for the group. The candidates will establish a committee to develop a unified governing platform and a liaison group to integrate the views of the other minor opposition aspirants as well. All three emphasized they would only participate in the December 3 presidential elections if the National Electoral Council conceded to the opposition's electoral demands, namely removal of the fingerprint machines, manual count of all voting receipts, an independently-audited electoral registry (REP), and the publication of the REP with addresses as called for in electoral law. While the candidates' immediate focus is the election, the agreement included developing a long-term opposition strategy for action beyond December.

12. (SBU) Gerardo Blyde, Secretary General of Borges' party, Primero Justicia, told poloff June 6 that the agreement was the result of weeks of negotiations. While the committee will prepare for a primary, Blyde thought there was a strong

chance the candidates would come to an agreement on their own.

13. (C) Sumate leader Roberto Abdul told poloff June 6 that the organization supports the agreement, although its President, Alejandro Plaz, publicly criticized the candidates for not including the minor opposition aspirants in the committee charged with organizing the potential primary. Abdul said Sumate is privately trying to convince the candidates to widen the committee and thinks they will eventually agree. Still, Abdul said Sumate would continue with preparations for the primary that it had been organizing, tentatively scheduled for July 16, until an agreement on the unified candidate or a separate mechanism is reached.

Comment

14. (C) The decision is a breakthrough for the three principle opposition candidates, who apparently want to maintain more control of the candidate selection process by eliminating the minor candidates and reducing Sumate's prominence. It would also be a positive development if they can develop a unifying and coherent electoral platform and strategy. We suspect, however, that the three candidates are only paying lip service to the possibility of a primary on August 6, as old guard Venezuelan politicians prefer to settle such issues behind closed doors.

CARACAS 00001665 002 OF 002

WHITAKER